

O'Brien continues to fight layoffs

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Rep. George O'Brien, continuing his campaign against proposed layoffs at the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, Friday urged Under Secretary of the Army James Ambrose to "give Joliet a fair shake."

The Joliet Republican said the Army's plans to slash the plant's payroll by a "draconian 38 percent" would seem to be a "clear signal" of the Army's intention to close the plant.

"Such an action is specifically barred" by the new Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law, O'Brien said in a letter delivered Friday to Ambrose.

Ambrose called O'Brien soon after receiving the letter to say that he is giving the situation a "full review," and no decision on reductions will be made until next week, an O'Brien aide said.

O'Brien has complained that the planned reductions at Joliet exceed the 4.9 percent reductions in some areas of military spending which are to take place in March.

He was told earlier this week by an official of Uniroyal Inc., the contractor which maintains the plant on a standby basis, that the Army wants to lay off 115 of the 298 employees by mid-March and another 15 by July 1.